

## **Mobility hubs can remove car from journey planning - Rachael Murphy**

**Mobility Hubs are highly visible, safe and accessible spaces where public, shared and active travel modes are co-located alongside improvements to public realm and, where relevant, enhanced community facilities. They are about the removal of the private car from journey planning. What you might find at one are bus and train connectivity, bike and lift share, a car club, electric vehicle charging, Digital Demand Responsive Transport, cycle-parking and storage, lockers for parcels collection and other facilities to make the place special, including toilets, a cafe, vendors or vending machines, wayfinding and shared office-space.**

[By Rachael Murphy](#)

Policy drivers that make Mobility Hubs an idea whose time has come include the climate emergency and the associated need to decarbonise transport, the steep fall in this century of bus patronage, transport poverty of choice including car-dependency, place standards, the vogue for 20-minute neighbourhoods, the target of a 20% reduction in car kilometres and considerations of physical and mental health and wellbeing, contending the isolation which can be a feature of modern life.

Placemaking considerations include quality of life improvements, social space for interaction with nature and reflection on our environment, working, living and playing differently and concern about air quality.

Community concerns include meeting local needs, implementing the findings of the Just Transition Commission, providing community engagement events, conforming to community assessments and delivering active travel planning with partners so that there may be a shared transport response targeted to the location's circumstances.

Three key factors in changing behaviours are motivation, capability and opportunity. Lifestyle changes occur at key junctures in people's lives such as moving house, changing job or going to university, and these may nudge behaviours towards more sustainable travel patterns.

There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to Mobility Hubs, each of which will have its own workable characteristics and components. They can be at city-centre interchanges, linking transport corridors, suburban minihubs, business park or housing developments, rural market town hubs or tourism areas.

Lead organisations can range from local authorities and education or healthcare providers through infrastructure providers and operators to the private sector and community groups. The local authority might own the land and buildings but leave it to a community group to manage the Hub.

Maintenance should be linked to a revenue stream for sustainability, and to address vandalism needs to involve the police. Funding streams can come from developer contributions through the planning process, transport and regeneration grants from local and central government, local enterprise partnerships and business improvement districts or from community programmes. Multi-revenue sources can include user charges, revenue from commercial components, rent or concession or service charges, franchise payments, advertising and sponsorship (particularly for bike-hire) and parking income.

Good design should promote visibility and accessibility, choice of sustainable modes, ease of switching both physically and digitally, safety, practical non-transport additions and visual enhancement that contributes to social and community fabric. There should be awareness of the needs of particular groups, including those with autism or dementia.

Local authorities must practise what they preach, with staff incentivised to promote and use shared transport. While the pandemic has represented a setback notably to use of public transport, it has also caused us to re-evaluate the journeys that we make and may thus trigger behavioural change in a positive direction. Mobility Hubs seek never to undermine public transport but always to extend its appeal, for example by facilitating access to it over the first and last mile.



*Rachael Murphy, Scottish director of CoMoUK, the charity for the promotion of Shared Transport for Public Good.*